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ZNY SSSSS ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5429
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0924
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0093
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 002998

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DEPT FOR NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/13/2019
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PARM](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: PM MALIKI AND PRESIDENT TALABANI DISCUSS ELECTIONS
AND TERRORIST ATTACKS WITH GENERAL PETRAEUS

REF: BAGHDAD 2851

Classified By: DCM Robert Ford for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (S//NF) SUMMARY. On October 25, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki hosted General David Petraeus at his residence, shortly after returning from visiting the blast sites at the Ministry of Justice and Baghdad Provincial Council. The PM stressed that there continued to be successful operations against Al-Qa'ida (AQI) and former Ba'athists. General Petraeus stressed the need to maintain operational tempo against insurgent/terrorist groups, and asked that the PM look for ways to speed the judicial support for Special Operations Forces, saying that the Iraqi judiciary needed to produce warrants at the speed of incoming intelligence. In response to General Petraeus's questions on possible resolution to Iraq-Kuwaiti border issues, Maliki fell back on traditional positions stating that once Chapter VII is addressed, the GOI could look at the border issues. Prior to the PM meeting, President Talabani hosted General Petraeus for lunch and indicated that House Speaker Ayad Sammaraie plans to present his proposed terms for a draft election law at the Presidency Council for National Security (PCNS) to be held at Talabani's residence. He highly doubted that the Sunni Arabs or Turkomans would boycott elections. Minister of Interior Bolani agreed that the speed of judicial support to operations should be increased. He felt there was good cooperation between the judiciary and the MOI, but suggested that cooperation could improve between the Ministry of Defense and the MOI. He thanked the United States for supporting the MOI, but said both the U.S. military and the Embassy must/must be involved in the election process to ensure it goes smoothly. END SUMMARY.

PM Maliki on Terrorism, Operational Tempo, Kuwait, and Elections

¶2. (S//NF) On October 25, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki hosted General David Petraeus at his residence, shortly after returning from visiting the blast sites at the Ministry of Justice and Baghdad Provincial Council. The PM stressed that there continued to be successful operations against Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) and former Ba'athists by the Counter-Terrorism Bureau (CTB or in some circles Counter-Terrorism Service, CTS). He cautioned that the Police and Army infantry were still prone to penetration, suggesting up to 800 police or Ministry of Interior personnel could be Fedeyen loyalists, specifically comrades or classmates of former regime elements. (Comment: While infiltration remains an issue we have no information to confirm the 800 figure. End Comment.) General Petraeus stressed the need to maintain operational tempo against insurgent/terrorist groups and suggested the

need to pay bonuses to Iraqi Special Operations Forces -- the most important forces in the counterterrorism fight. He also asked that the PM look for ways to speed the judicial support for Special Operations Forces, saying that the Iraqi judiciary needed to produce warrants at the speed of incoming intelligence. Maliki warned that the Council of Representatives (CoR) was not moving fast enough to pass authorizing legislation. General Petraeus noted that the terrorist attacks of the day should increase political pressure on the CoR to act more quickly. (Comment: Post is Qpressure on the CoR to act more quickly. (Comment: Post is working through the interagency to ensure that any National Security legislation that is passed has appropriate civilian oversight and is in line with Constitutional guidance. End Comment)

¶3. (S//NF) PM Maliki suggested weapons used by AQI and other extremists were produced locally with members of the former military-industrial complex under Saddam Hussein and with local political cover in areas around Mosul or other Sunni/AQI strongholds. General Petraeus agreed that AQI was getting stronger in certain areas, such as Fallujah, Taji and Taramiyah, but also stressed that weapons were still coming in from Iran in the form of rockets and explosive-formed projectiles (EFPs). He added that foreign fighter flows from Syria were down and more should be done to counter malign Iranian influences.

¶4. (C) Turning to the elections, Maliki expressed concern that some wanted to delay the election, in part because they wanted to prevent further validation of the Iraqi government. He asked rhetorically why only now was the CoR debating the election law or looking to remove Independent High Electoral

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Commission (IHEC) members. Maliki asserted that CoR members needed to step up to their responsibilities; others should not need to sort out a compromise for them. There was agreement that an open list was likely, but there remained fears that the coalitions were still sectarian in nature. Maliki noted it was unfortunate former-PM Ayad Allawi could not be brought into his coalition. Maliki reminded the group that many different factions have their own agendas (reftel).

¶5. (C) In response to General Petraeus's questions on possible resolution to Iraq-Kuwaiti border issues, Maliki said that Chapter VII sanctions connected to Kuwait should be left until later. Election posturing by Iraqi political parties would make addressing the Kuwait problem hard for now. General Petraeus pushed the PM to recognize a border it has already recognized, and highlighted the potential \$700 million that is currently being held in payment of the Oil for Food (OFF) contracts. Maliki responded by quoting the Kuwaiti recognition of the Geneva Convention providing access to the sea. He charged that the Kuwaitis were suspicious of Iraq and treated the GOI badly in diplomatic fora, producing forged documents as proof for false arguments. Maliki suggested approaching the issues with Kuwait one at a time. Regarding the WMD issue related to Chapter VII, Maliki offered that the GOI might be able to provide the required assurances before the January national election.

Talabani discusses Election Law, Chapter VII, Iranian influence, and Kirkuk

¶6. (C) Prior to the PM meeting, President Talabani hosted General Petraeus for lunch at his Baghdad residence. In answer to Petraeus's inquiry about the status of the election law, Talabani indicated he might soften his stance on his previous rejection of increasing parliamentary seats from 275 to 311, saying "there may be a need to increase the total number of seats in parliament but not to the extent some people want." He said if the total number of seats is raised

in provinces where there is unusual hikes in voter registration, places like Mosul would receive an additional 13 seats. Talabani exclaimed, "This is too much. We cannot accept this." Drilling down on quota seats, Talabani indicated that there are currently nine parliamentarians from Kirkuk: five Kurds, two Arab and two Turkomans. Talabani insisted that quota seats cannot be applied to Kirkuk because the High Court deemed this to be unconstitutional.

17. (S//NF) General Petraeus stressed the need for security forces to maintain a high tempo of operations and for the Iraqi judicial system to swiftly produce warrants to act on intelligence in a timely fashion. He noted that the number of foreign fighters entering Iraq has declined to probably less than 10 per month but that there is a clear attempt to reestablish AQ cells. He also mentioned that Iran continues providing money, weapons, and direction -- at which point Talabani interjected that he believes some Iranians are lying low waiting to act at a later date. General Petraeus mentioned that we continue to see on average one rocket and one EFP attack daily and that next time Talabani spoke to Qassem Soleimani, he might pass along that we are concerned about Iranian actions and that accusations about the U.S. about Iranian actions and that accusations about the U.S. supporting Jundullah are nonsense. Talabani agreed the accusations were baseless. Petraeus added that Qassem Soleimani should also know that his actions play into the hands of Iran's opponents, as they make it easier to enact sanctions and to rally international public opinion against the Iranian Government.

18. (C) With regard to Iraq-Kuwait relations and UN Chapter VII sanctions, Talabani recognized the United States' assistance. He said that there is little or no controversy about the Iraq-Kuwait land border and understood that, because of the GOI's reservations about the maritime border, the Kuwaitis would demand reaffirmation of UNSCR 833 before moving forward on other issues. Talabani surmised that some kind of statement or letter of Iraqi commitment to all its agreement with Kuwait could be issued. Talabani appeared open to Petraeus's suggestion to close out the remaining OFF contracts.

MinInt Bolani highlights security cooperation and need for more assistance

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19. (C) General Petraeus visited Minister of Interior Jawad Bolani to push for a continued increase in operational tempo against AQI and other violent extremists and reminded him that while operations against Sunni groups were needed, Shia militants should be targeted for increased operations as well. Bolani agreed that the speed of judicial support to operations should be increased, but stated that he felt there was good cooperation between the judiciary and the MOI. He did suggest that cooperation could improve between the Ministry of Defense and the MOI. Bolani pointed out that police schools in Baghdad and Ninewa were both graduating officer classes, and that Babil was still training regular police forces. He highlighted the police performance against insurgents in Anbar, and suggested the police should get more credit within the GOI security structure for both the quality of their fight and their sacrifices. Bolani acknowledged that infiltration of the police was a concern but added "personalities are harder than weapons to detect." Petraeus suggested that Iraq needed to start thinking now about steps to take, as support for Iraqi police forces begins to shift from DoD to the State Department, and also added that the next time Bolani speaks with Qassem Soleimani, he should tell him that General Petraeus wonders why there is still on average one EFP and on rocket attack per day in Iraq. Bolani added that election security was his largest challenge, to include security for observers and transfer of power. He thanked the United States for supporting the MOI, but

stressed that both the U.S. military and the Embassy must/must be involved in the election process to ensure it goes smoothly.

110. (U) This cable was cleared by CENTCOM.

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